

Says Osama bin Laden Disciple Deserves Military Tribunal

Buchanan is author of “Military Tribunals for Terrorist Act”

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- The Obama administration should not allow a key disciple of Osama bin Laden to be tried in civilian court in Washington D.C., but instead should send him to a military tribunal for prosecution as an enemy combatant, Rep Vern Buchanan (R-FL) said today. Buchanan is the author of the “Military Tribunals Act for Terrorists,” which would require that terrorists are interrogated, prosecuted and tried in military, not civilian courts.

The Associated Press reported today that the Justice Department is considering a criminal trial in Washington for the Guantanamo Bay detainee suspected of masterminding the bombing of a Bali nightclub that killed 202 people, a plan that would bring one of the world's most notorious terrorism suspects just steps from the U.S. Capitol.

Riduan Isamuddin, better known as Hambali, was allegedly Osama bin Laden's point man in Indonesia and, until his capture in August 2003, was believed to be the main link between al Qaeda and Jemaah Islamiyah, the terror group blamed for the 2002 bombing on the island of Bali.

Other terrorism trials also may occur in Washington and New York City under a proposal being discussed within the Obama administration, according to U.S. officials briefed on the plan. Authorities already have begun discussing the intense security measures needed to bring Hambali and others before a Washington federal judge, the officials said.

Buchanan's bill mandating military tribunals for terrorists is cosponsored by two leading, national experts; the vice chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, Rep. Lamar Smith (R-TX) and the vice chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, Rep. Howard “Buck” McKeon (R-CA).

Two other high-profile terrorists with links to al Qaeda already are being processed through civilian courts instead of a military tribunal. The most recent is the al Qaeda-trained Nigerian terrorist, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, who tried to blow up a U.S. airplane in Detroit on Christmas Day. The other is Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the mastermind behind the September 11 attacks that killed more than 3,000 people in New York City.

The decision to prosecute these terrorists in civilian court was made by the Attorney General and the Justice Department. Buchanan's Military Tribunals for Terrorists Act would take away the discretion to try terrorists in civilian court and mandate that they always be treated as enemy combatants and brought before a military tribunal.

“Using military tribunals to interrogate, prosecute, and sentence foreign terrorists who conspire, attempt, or attack the United States and its people is a far better way to handle these kinds of sensitive matters,” Buchanan said. “Military tribunals protect U.S. intelligence sources and methods from being revealed in open court.”

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